

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of communicating activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the method comprising:

accepting from a first user information identifying at least a second user;

receiving from the first user at least one user-selected characteristic associated with media;

processing a media request from the first user via a communication network, the requested media having a pre-defined set of characteristics;

notifying the at least a second user, via the communication network, of the consumption of the requested media by the first user, if the pre-defined set of characteristics for the requested media matches the at least one user-selected characteristic; and

refraining from notifying the at least a second user, via the communication network, of the consumption of the requested media by the first user, if the pre-defined set of characteristics for the requested media does not match the at least one user-defined characteristic.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the first user and the at least a second user are associated with at least one of an Internet protocol (IP)

address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the communication network is the Internet.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the requested media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the information identifying at least a second user comprises a legal name, a given name, a screen name, a user identifier, a network identifier, an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one user-defined characteristic comprises at least one of a title keyword, a subject keyword, a time period, a genre, an artist, a media channel type, a mode, and a language.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the notifying comprises transmitting a message via the communication network.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

keeping a record of the notifying; and

the record being used by the second user to provide at least one of services and incentives to the first user.

11. A method of communicating activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the method comprising:

associating at least one media characteristic with a user;

processing a request for media, from the user, the media having a pre-defined set of characteristics;

sending a notification via a communication network if the pre-defined set of characteristics for the requested media matches the at least one media characteristic; and

refraining from sending a notification if the pre-defined set of characteristics for the requested media does not match the at least one media characteristic.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the requested media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the at least one media characteristic comprises at least one of a title keyword, a subject keyword, a genre, an artist, a time period, a media channel type, a mode, and a language.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the pre-defined set of characteristics comprises at least one media characteristic.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

16. A system supporting the communication of activity information to support user interaction in a communication network, the system comprising:

- a first storage, at a first location, having an associated first network address;

- a first set top box circuitry at the first location, the first set top box circuitry communicatively coupled to the first storage to support consumption of media by a first user;

- a second storage, at a second location, having an associated second network address;

a second set top box circuitry at the second location, the second set top box circuitry communicatively coupled to the second storage to support consumption of media by a second user;

at least one media characteristic associated with the second user; and

server software that receives a request that identifies at least the associated first network address and media having at least one pre-defined characteristic, and that notifies, via a communication network, the associated second network address if the at least one media characteristic matches the at least one pre-defined characteristic.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the media comprises at least one of audio, a still image, video, real time video, and data.

18. The system of claim 16 wherein the associated first and second network addresses are one of an Internet protocol (IP) address, a media access control (MAC) address, and an electronic serial number (ESN).

19. The system of claim 16 wherein consumption comprises at least one of playing audio, displaying a still image, displaying video, and displaying data.

20. The system of claim 16 wherein the communication network comprises at least one of a cable infrastructure, a satellite network

infrastructure, a digital subscriber line (DSL) infrastructure, an Internet infrastructure, an intranet infrastructure, a wired infrastructure, and a wireless infrastructure.

21. The system of claim 16 wherein the server software is at a location separate from the first home and the second home.

22. The method of claim 16 wherein the at least one media characteristic comprises at least one of a title keyword, a subject keyword, a genre, an artist, a time period, a media channel type, a mode, and a language.

23. The method of claim 16 wherein the at least one pre-defined characteristic comprises at least one of a title keyword, a subject keyword, a genre, an artist, a time period, a media channel type, a mode, and a language.